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LIMITED

10 JUL 1959

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Economic Research, OPR
THROUGH: Chief, Industrial Division, OPR
FROM: Chief, Guided Missile Branch, D/I
SUBJECT: Elicitation of Guided Missile Information by the Vice President

1. The highest priority gaps in our knowledge of the Soviet guided missile program are the following: (a) are ICBMs now being deployed to operational launching facilities? (b) if so, at what rate and to what kind of facility (i.e., soft fixed site, hard fixed site, rail mobile units)? (c) what is the magnitude of the planned Soviet ICBM program? (d) where or at how many facilities are Soviet ICBMs produced? and (e) what is the apparent view of Soviet leaders as to the real importance or significance of possessing ICBMs, i.e., do they really view it as a weapon which will alter the military balance of power, or simply as a weapon which will guarantee peace through mutual deterrence?

2. It is most unlikely that the Vice President could elicit direct answers to any of these questions. We recommend, however, that the DCI review with Mr. Nixon the types of statements made by Khrushchev to important visitors in the past and urge the Vice President to seize any such opportunity to elicit additional or clarifying information, particularly with respect to the points above. In past interviews, Khrushchev has frequently made provocative, apparently spontaneous and sometimes contradictory general statements about Soviet missile capabilities. Because there has rarely been any response to or questioning about these statements, valuable opportunities have been lost and many of the statements have been difficult to interpret. We believe that Khrushchev could probably be provoked into information of considerably intelligence significance by rejoinders which would extend any missile discussion.

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3. While it is not possible to anticipate the remarks Khrushchev might choose to make, several kinds of situations suggest themselves. For example, Khrushchev might repeat his January 1959 public statement that the USSR has ICBMs in "series production". It would then be appropriate for the Vice President

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to point out that the US is also in series production, but that missiles alone are of no military significance unless they are produced in relatively large quantities and unless launching sites, all the associated equipment and trained personnel are also available; noting that these latter circumstances will take many years to accomplish, and, therefore, a few months' differences in the beginning means very little. If an opportunity arises to discuss Khrushchev's comment to Mr. Harriman that for 30 billion rubles spent in the next 5-6 years the USSR could acquire sufficient missiles to destroy the industrial centers of the US and Western Europe, Mr. Nixon might note that these newer weapons become obsolete rapidly, and ask whether Khrushchev really means that the USSR has already embarked on such a program, and even why the USSR feels it requires such a large force, (how many missiles this arm represents). To cite just one additional example from past experience, Khrushchev reportedly told Mr. MacMillan that the USSR would shortly be able to launch intercontinental missiles from "mobile platforms". If any reference is made to mobility, Mr. Nixon might use this opportunity to point out that he understands from the US technical people that this creates many new problems and is not as easy as it appears at first glance.

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